



AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM (S.311 / H.565)

LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Farm to school programs strengthen student achievement, improve nutrition, and grow the local economy. A Massachusetts Farm to School Program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will support the infrastructure investments, staff training, and educational initiatives that lead to farm to school program success and sustainability. A local food incentive will help schools and early education programs consistently offer students healthy, locally grown foods as part of school meals. Providing schools with the resources they need to start up or expand local food sourcing and education activities is a win for our kids, our farmers, and our communities.



BILL HIGHLIGHTS

- Introduced by Senator Comerford and Representatives Duffy and Vargas
- Builds on successful pilots (the MA FRESH grant & Local Food for Schools Program)
- Establishes a permanent competitive grant program and permanent local food incentive within the DESE for eligible K-12 schools and licensed child care programs
- Directs investment to Massachusetts farmers and fishers for a more resilient food system
- Builds the capacity of public schools and child care programs to purchase ingredients grown in Massachusetts, prepare scratch-cooked meals, and provide experiential food education
- Increases access to healthy, high quality foods for all Massachusetts kids
- Has cross-sector impact by updating infrastructure, providing job training, supporting local business growth, educating students, and improving public health

TAKE ACTION

- Please sign on as a co-sponsor of S.311 or H.565, “An Act establishing the Massachusetts farm to school program”
- In the FY26 DESE budget (Line Item 7010-1192) please support level funding of \$750,000 to sustain the farm to school FRESH Grant program and \$2.5 million to continue the Local Food for Schools program.

Please contact Simca Horwitz at simca@massfarmtoschool.org or 413-253-3844.

PROVIDING A LOCAL FOODS INCENTIVE MEANS...

More money for Massachusetts' food and farm economy

Every \$1.00 spent on direct farm purchases in Massachusetts generates another \$1.12 in local economic activity. Massachusetts schools spend over \$170 million on food every year and we want more of those dollars going to Massachusetts farmers and fishers.



Increased access to high quality foods for Massachusetts school kids

Every kid in Massachusetts should grow up with local food on their lunch tray. By giving schools and early childhood programs the resources they need to buy from Massachusetts farmers and fishers, we are ensuring equitable access to high quality, local food for all Massachusetts school children.



Expanded markets for Massachusetts farmers & fishers

Over 110 Massachusetts farms sell food to Massachusetts schools and early childhood programs. 25% of those farmers report expanding their businesses to meet school demand. Let's grow the number of producers selling to schools!



School meal programs THRIVE

Universal school meals and a local food incentive can work together to increase participation in school meals, so more students are nourished and ready to learn. When paired, these programs increase meal participation, which gives school food programs more dollars to buy more local food, sending more money back into the local economy.

